

City of Corunna
Special Meeting of
Monday, August 26, 2002

Present: Corey, Jessen, Johnson, Mehigh, Runyan, Sanderson, Wagner.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Joe DeCaire, Caledonia Charter Township; Jackie Leone, The Argus Press; Diane Johnson; Pat & Bernie Yott; Jan Scott; Nan Kribs; Priscilla Rathbun; Pam Malaska; Shirley Sanderson; Geri Hagadon, Caledonia Charter Township; Bill Yocum; Martha Lewis; Tom Wazny, Caledonia Charter Township Supervisor; Bill Striggow; Sheila Volek; Avery Weaver; Cathy Cramner; Bev Hand; Cindy Long; Mikki Brant; Millie Taute; Derald Cramner; Sandy Sheridan; Tom Sheridan; Beth Gooding; Keith Johnson; Chuck Long; Sgt. Kevin Clark, Police Department; Carol Tower; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the lower level of the Community Center by Mayor Corey at 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Jessen moved, Johnson seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Jessen, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

LIBRARY: Mayor Corey requested that council suspend the regular Rules of Procedure to allow

for a more free flowing discussion. Mehigh moved, Johnson seconded to suspend the Rules of Procedure.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Jessen, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Mayor Corey stated he wanted to put past issues in the past and to try to move forward. If there are specific issues that need to be brought up, the issues will be dealt with, but there are some other underlying governmental processes that need to be discussed. He further stated there might be some issues that the Library Board would like to bring up. He also stated he would also like to look at where the library will go in the future. Mayor Corey asked if the city council or Library Board had any specific issues they would like to bring up. Councilperson Mehigh stated he felt there was a lot of confusion regarding the state law that governs libraries. Joe Sawyer explained our library is organized under Act 164 of 1877, which set up the managing of the Library Board. The board members are appointed by the city council upon the recommendation of the mayor. He further stated the Library Board controls the public donations, penal fines, and library

expenditures. Bill Yocum advised the future of the library building has been a topic for seven years. He explained part of Act 164 states that the library funds must be deposited in the city treasury, but he was not aware of any library that does not have a tight relationship with the government the library serves. Mr. Sawyer advised deposits made into the city treasury does not mean the city has to provide for the free administration of the funds. Sue Huff advised libraries are set up many different ways depending on the size of the library. The larger libraries have their own accounting procedures, audits, insurance, and janitors. Bill Yocum asked council if they had any specific concerns regarding the library operations, activities, or Library Board. He stated there has been disputes about who has control over the budget and who makes the General Fund contribution. There have been manipulations of monies allocated to the library that the Library Board was not involved with ahead of time. He further stated he felt there have been some misunderstandings. He has seen confusion and frustration, but he did not see any animosity. He also stated if the city council has some questions they would like to ask, the Library Board would work on getting council the answers. Mr. Yocum advised he felt there were some underlying causes and interactions recently, but he was not sure if the problems were particularly serious. He further advised if there are some underlying misunderstandings or feelings that the library is not being operated properly then those issues need to be brought to the surface so they can be dealt with. Geri Hagadon stated Caledonia Charter Township contributes a large sum of money to the library, and she was concerned that the township does not have a vote on money issues. She further stated she felt the township should have at least one vote on the Library Board. There are other townships and the City of Owosso who use the library without contributing anything. Bill Yocum advised this was news to him because the Library Board has asked Caledonia Charter Township if they wanted an official representative on the board and the township declined. If the township has a different opinion now, then this is something that the Library Board would consider. Mayor Corey asked how many voting members the Library Board has. Pam Malaska advised five. Mayor Corey asked how many non-voting members the board has. Ms. Malaska advised five. Joe DeCaire advised Caledonia Charter Township has talked about having a voting member on the Library Board at the township level but maybe the request never came to the Library Board. He asked what the township needed to do to get a voting member on the Library Board. Ms. Malaska advised she could put the issue on the next agenda. Ms. Huff advised at the September meeting, the Library Board would be discussing the possibility of charging people who live outside the City of Corunna and Caledonia Charter Township that want to use the library. Ms. Malaska stated this is one thing the board members heard at the last city council meeting that there were some concerns from a few councilpeople that there were some people who were using our library for free while the city and township residents were paying for the library. She further advised the Library Board would be looking at charging a fee for library cards issued outside of the city and township. Mr. Yocum advised the city has the public school library but people do not have access to it, and there is the county library but they only operate bookmobiles. The only functioning library other than the City of Owosso library is the Corunna Public Library. Councilperson Runyan stated he heard that there are townships that would like to join a library. Mr. Yocum advised libraries are classed according to size and state law regulates the types of staff that are hired. If the Corunna Public Library were to expand its service

area, more and better trained library staff would have to be hired, which would increase the library operations cost. Ms. Huff advised the Corunna Public Library is a Class Three library and the head librarian would have to have a bachelor's degree, and the staff would have to be certified, which the Corunna staff is not. Ms. Malaska stated a consultant has suggested having at least 7,000 square feet for the amount of people the library serves today. Mr. Yocum stated the service area is defined as the City of Corunna and Caledonia Township. Mayor Corey stated if the library allows other people to use the library for a fee then that would be expanding the service area. Mr. Yocum advised one of the challenges the library has is operating year to year. If the city falls on hard times, the city has to reduce the General Fund contributions and the same thing goes with the township. He further advised the libraries that are the easiest to administer are the ones that have a 20-year millage. The libraries know how much money they will have and can plan their expenses and expansions. He also advised he was sure that some of the townships that are involved with district libraries would love to pay the same millage rate that the city and township is paying because it would be a lot less than the Owosso District Library millage is. Councilperson Runyan stated the city knows the library is too small and asked what the library's goal was if the library was expanded. Mr. Yocum advised the library could try to maintain the same service area and make some improvements to the facility. The term "district" is a dirty word right now, but conceivably, there could be a library district that encompasses the entire county outside of the Owosso library. Councilperson Mehig asked if anyone had done a cost analysis. Ms. Malaska advised the cost analysis has been covered to some extent. A library consultant told the Library Board that 7,000 square feet was needed and the present library is 1,000 square feet. Ms. Huff advised 1,100 square feet. Ms. Malaska advised the library consultant was very nice to talk to and they have offered to help the library raise money. A new building would be very expensive, but without the support of the city as a whole, she did not know where the Library Board stood on this. Councilperson Mehig stated once a cost is determined, the library could go to a bigger building and offer better services. He further stated it would be more feasible to have a bigger library in order to offer more services. Ms. Malaska stated if the library lets all of the townships in to get their funding, and there are no library facilities available, then how would these people be serviced. Ms. Huff advised it would cost \$9,000 to get a cost analysis started. Councilperson Mehig stated the council has always been interested in getting a bigger and better library. He further stated in order to service more people, a larger library is needed if it is feasible. Ms. Malaska asked if Councilperson Mehig would like to see the library in the City of Corunna. Councilperson Mehig advised yes. Ms. Malaska asked where a library would be put. Councilperson Mehig advised he did not know and asked Mr. Sawyer if he knew. Mr. Sawyer advised the city has a lot of land. Mayor Corey stated if he heard correctly, an analysis would cost \$9,000, and an analysis is good to talk about, but realistically, the cost is \$9,000. He was not saying the analysis should not be done, but the city has to be ready to back up the analysis. Ms. Malaska stated the consultant broke down the amount of money that would come from the city in other places they have done consultations. She further stated the money the library needs to raise was mind-boggling. Councilperson Sanderson stated this is part of the problem. If the Library Board has talked to someone, then why has the Library Board not come back to the city or Mr. Sawyer in order to get some help. Mr. Yocum advised the city has had

council representatives involved at the time the library consultant came. Mayor Corey stated some of the issues that have created confusion is that the city council has rotating people and the information does not get back to the council. Ms. Malaska advised so does the Library Board. Ms. Huff stated independent libraries are ridiculous and teaming up with another municipality is a better option. She asked Ms. Hagadon if Caledonia Charter Township would be interested in forming a district library if another municipality is asked to participate. Ms. Hagadon advised she would have to take the issue to the township board. Ms. Huff advised the bookmobile has been sold and the county library has no books. It is an administrative branch only. She further advised city residents would have to pay to use their resources because the county library does book interloans only. If a Corunna resident went to the Owosso library, an \$82 fee would have to be paid, but since the Corunna library belongs to the same co-op, the Corunna library can borrow books for free. Mr. Yocum stated he recalls there were questions about where the district library branches would be, how the libraries would be administered and whether to ask for millage. He further stated there was not any support from the township, but he did not recall what the city's position was. Councilperson Runyan asked if a district library would have to be funded by millage or by a government entity. Ms. Huff advised a district library has to be funded by millage. Councilperson Sanderson stated even though the library is very important, council has to look at the cold hard facts that the city has other things that have to be done such as the water, sewer and the dam. He further stated the city residents cannot afford to do pay additional dollars to the library in light of the other critical city needs. He asked why the city cannot live with the library the way it is now for awhile because the city is on hard times right now. Mr. Yocum stated he has always regarded libraries as part of the infrastructure, and if he were a CEO of a small high tech company who was thinking about locating to the community, he would look at what the community's quality of life was. Councilperson Mehig stated the city is very economically stressed. If a business wanted to build in the city, the city would not be able to offer sewer to them because the state has placed a moratorium on the city's sewer system. He further stated nobody here wants to close the library because the library is very important, but the city will be hurting in the next few months. He spoke with State Representative Larry Julian and was advised that the state revenue sharing will continue to go down because the state does not have enough money to give out. Councilperson Mehig advised the city has a highly dangerous dam and council does not know what the state will make the city do. He further advised he would like to see the library share information with the council. Mr. Yocum stated he was confused. On one hand, council talks about a new and bigger library but on the other hand council is singing the blues about other expensive projects. Mr. Yocum further stated he understood a little about the history of the city's sewers and knows the sewer lines need to be replaced. He asked if the city was willing to fund the library at the current levels, if the city was planning to cut funding by 50 percent, or if the city was looking at increasing the funding. Mayor Corey advised he wanted to summarize what has been discussed. If the library wants to expand its service area then a larger building is needed that has to be funded by millage. He further advised the city is prevented from growth because of the city's infrastructure and this situation is preventing the city from getting additional tax base. Mr. Yocum stated he did not come to the meeting tonight with any anticipation about talking about a newer and bigger facility, which is always the goal. He further stated it sounds like unless the

library goes to a district library, has a millage, or bring in other townships, then the city will not get a bigger library. He asked if the library can anticipate funding at the existing level while the city tries to address the other issues. Councilperson Johnson advised a lot of things depend on money. She further advised she wants to put the past in the past and get on with the future. She suggested continuing with the library that the city has now. Ms. Malaska advised the Library Board is concerned with funding cuts, but if the city's contribution is cut too low, the library will have to close. Ms. Huff advised there are certain state aid requirements that have to be met in order to get state aid. The library has to be open at least 30 hours per week, the education levels required for a Class Three library which includes a bachelor's degree for the director and certificates for the support staff, and the library has to maintain three-tenths of one mill from the city. She further advised if the library does not have those things, then the library will not get state aid and without state aid, the library will have to close. Mr. Sawyer advised the city currently pays six-tenths of a mill. Mr. Yocum advised the library has always had an open-door policy. He asked what council thought about charging fees for people who do not live in the city or Caledonia Charter Township. Councilperson Mehig advised he thought those people should pay a nominal fee. Mayor Corey asked if an annual per household fee was being discussed. Ms. Huff advised a fee could be charged per card, but a family could decide to only buy one card. She further advised this would not be stable funding because she would not know how many people would buy a card. It would only be a guess. Mr. DeCaire advised the Owosso library charges \$82 per card, and the card is good for the whole family. Councilperson Mehig stated no one is saying that \$82 would be charged. Ms. Malaska stated if the Library Board sets a price then everyone has to pay that price including Caledonia Charter Township. Councilperson Mehig advised the fee for township residents would be paid through the government. Ms. Malaska advised the township only pays \$7 per person and the city pays \$10 per person so the fee should be the same across the board. Councilperson Mehig stated he did not think anyone present had a problem with that. Ms. Malaska advised the fee could be higher if the city gives the library more money. Mr. Yocum advised the Library Board should take a look at the number of patrons who are freeloading right now and look at what fees the library is capable of charging these patrons to see whether it is worth the administrative costs to get that money. Mayor Corey asked Ms. Huff if there was a way of tracking those patrons. Ms. Huff advised yes. Ms. Malaska advised Councilperson Johnson has that paperwork. Mr. Yocum advised he was sure the Library Board would be willing to take a closer look at charging non-residents if that is what council would like done. Mayor Corey stated it looked like some headway was made at the meeting. He asked if it would be beneficial to set up another meeting. Mr. Yocum suggested setting up an ad-hoc committee consisting of three people from the Library Board, city and township. These people could then report back to their boards as a whole. Councilperson Mehig advised he did not have a problem with forming a committee. Mayor Corey advised the committee might be beneficial. Councilperson Runyan stated he thought a committee should be formed. Mayor Corey advised he thought Councilperson Johnson should be on the committee. Councilperson Johnson advised Mr. Sawyer should also be on the committee. Councilperson Runyan advised he would like to be on the committee. Mayor Corey advised the city's representatives would be Councilpersons Runyan, Johnson and Sawyer.

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Avery Weaver advised those who know him know that libraries are very dear to his heart. He further advised the city's library continues to struggle to provide library service, and the library does a super job with what the library has. He also advised the county has a population of over 70,000 and there are seven libraries, which is a lot for the size of the population. Mr. Weaver stated he is a county commissioner and one of the things that is being looked at is cutting the budget just like the City of Corunna is. He further stated there is a possibility that there will be revenue sharing cuts and one of the areas that the county commissioners will probably look at cutting will be the support of the county library system. He does not want to see that happen, but his hands are tied. He commended the two groups for coming together and advised he would be willing to sit in on the ad-hoc group. He further advised there are two ways to create a district library. A new district library could be created with some of the other townships or the library could merge with the district libraries that already exist.

Keith Johnson stated 35 years ago the library building was a gas station that was made into a library, and people knew back then that the city needed a bigger library. He further stated there is no place in this city that has a more dedicated group of people than the Library Board and the Friends of the Library. These people have saved the city a lot of time and money and they are beautiful people. He also stated if it comes to a point when the city has to fix the dam then instead of dam the torpedoes and full speed ahead, the dam should be torpedoed so he can have a library.

Carol Tower advised she wanted to set the record straight. The county library has books, computers, tapes and periodicals that can be checked out. She further advised the county library offers free library cards and the library has a nice selection of books.

ADJOURN: Runyan moved, Mehig seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehig, Jessen, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 8:20 p.m.

STEVE COREY, MAYOR

YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK